

## The Way of the Cross



### Guided Reflections for Good Friday

*The material included in this booklet is aimed at helping us to focus our minds on the last hours before Jesus' death.*

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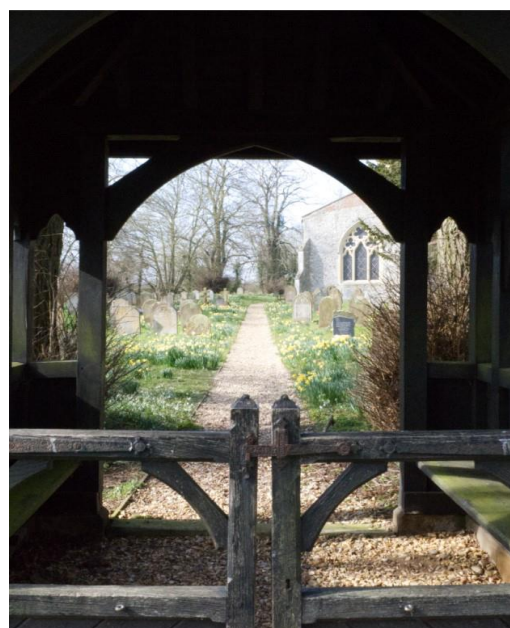
#### **The Opening**

2.00pm

Leader 1 (and all non-bold typeface throughout)

We meet on this Holy Day  
to honour the events  
of the first Good Friday.  
We come from scattered lives  
to offer our time and our will  
to what God will teach us  
through the cross of Christ.  
We bring ourselves in openness  
to being changed by our experiences  
and pray that we may be drawn deeper  
into the mysteries of Jesus' death,  
that we may glory in his resurrection  
and take the light of its hope to the whole world.

*A time of quiet*



## **Leader 2** (and all bold typeface throughout)

### **We Pray**

**God of our journeying,  
you have given us a desire to follow  
you and to set out in faith.  
Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus,  
that whatever we encounter as we  
travel,  
we may seek to glorify you by the way we  
live. Amen.**

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### **Section One**

2.05pm

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,  
**Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

### **Hymn**

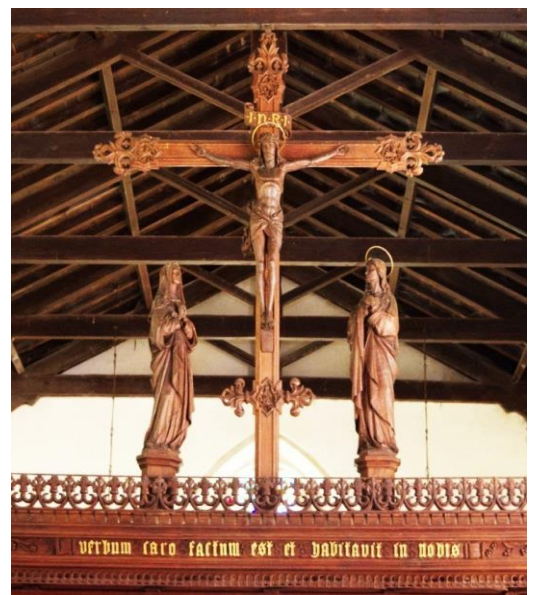
My song is love unknown,  
my Saviour's love to me,  
love to the loveless shown,  
that they might lovely be.  
O who am I, that for my sake my  
Lord should take frail flesh, and die?



*A time of quiet*

### **Reader 1: *Jesus is sentenced to death***

*As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed. Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. He asked them, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.*  
*Mark 15:1-15*



It is all too easy to condemn, being negative.

We see in this reading what human judgement can lead to and how wrong it can be. Here is God's own son judged, condemned. See how faulty and misguided our judgement on people can be.

Jesus help us to be less judgemental in our attitudes to others. Remind us often of your saying "Judge not, that you be not judged."

*A time of quiet*

### **Prayer**

**Lord Jesus you were condemned to death for political expediency; be with those who are imprisoned for the convenience of the powerful. You were the victim of unbridled injustice; change the minds and motives of those who oppress others. To you, Jesus, innocent though condemned be honour and glory. Amen**

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

### **Dedication**

Christ became obedient unto death for us,  
**even death upon a cross.**  
His punishment has brought us peace.  
**By his wounds we are healed.**  
Let us walk the way of the cross  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**



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## **Section 2**

2.15pm

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,  
**Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

### **Hymn**

He came from his blest throne,  
salvation to bestow;  
but men made strange,  
and none the longed-for Christ would know.  
But O, my Friend, my Friend indeed,  
who at my need his life did spend.

*A time of quiet*



## **Reader 2: Jesus takes up his cross**

*Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. Carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.*

*Mark 15:16-20, John 19:16b-17*

Most of us don't want to make people suffer. We would not willingly set out to hurt another human being. But we do so – by our insensitivity, irritability, careless words, thoughtlessness. We cause others to suffer just as surely as if we placed a heavy wooden cross on their shoulders and goaded them on. Jesus help us to realise the suffering that each of us can impose on others in small ways.

*A time of quiet*

### **Prayer**

**Lord Jesus, you carried your cross through the streets of Jerusalem: be with those who are loaded with burdens beyond their strength. You bore the weight of our sins when you carried the cross: help us to realise the cost of your love for us. To you, Jesus, bearing a cross on your own, be honour and glory. Amen.**

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**



### **Dedication**

Christ became obedient unto death for us,  
**even death upon a cross.**  
His punishment has brought us peace.  
**By his wounds we are healed.**  
Let us walk the way of the cross  
**In the name of Christ.**  
**Amen.**



### Section 3

2.25pm

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,  
**Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

#### Hymn

Sometimes they strew his way,  
and his sweet praises sing;  
resounding all the day  
hosannas to their King.  
Then "Crucify" is all their breath,  
and for his death they thirst and cry.

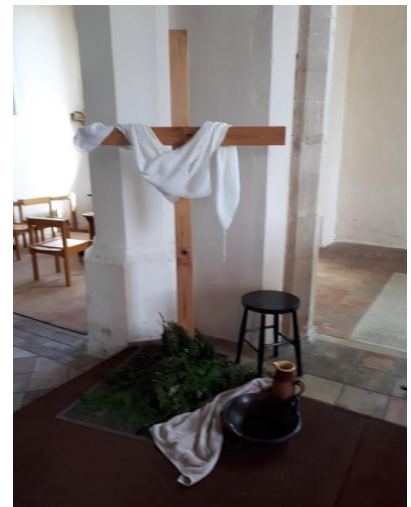
*A time of quiet*

#### **Reader 3: Jesus falls under the weight of the cross**

*Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

*John 12:23-24*

Physical suffering is always appalling to watch. Sometimes it can be even worse for the watcher than for the one undergoing pain. What do we do when people are suffering pain? Do we run away, scared for ourselves, unable to cope? Or do we stay, identifying ourselves with the person in pain, showing by our presence that we care and that we want to help? Jesus, help us never to run away from what is unpleasant in this life. Give us the courage to stay and to do what we can.

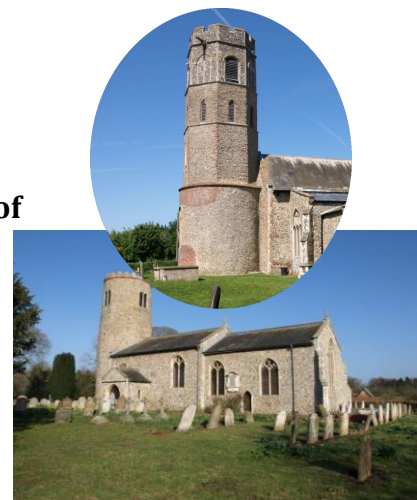


*A time of quiet*

#### Prayer

**Lord Jesus, you were worn down by fatigue;  
be with those from whom life drains all energy.  
You needed the help of a passing stranger:  
give us the humility to receive aid from others.  
To you, Jesus, weighed down with exhaustion and in need of  
help be honour and glory.  
Amen.**

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer**



## **Dedication**

Christ became obedient unto death for us,  
**even death upon a cross.**

His punishment has brought us peace.

**By his wounds we are healed.**

Let us walk the way of the cross

**In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

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## **Section Four**

2.35pm

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,

**Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

### *Hymn*

They rise and needs will have  
my dear Lord made away;  
a murderer they save,  
he Prince of Life they slay.  
Yet cheerful he to suffering goes,  
that he his foes  
from thence might free.

*A time of quiet*

### **Reader 4: Someone helps Jesus carry the cross**

*Simone of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. Matthew 27:32-33*



Simon was a black man. He stuck out in the crowd of Jews because of his features and colour. That is why the guards pounced on him and made him carry the Cross – an outsider. It seems unjust that he should have been pressed into a shameful job. It offends our sense of natural justice. And yet – aren't we all prejudiced against people of different religion, colour, education, background? Jesus, help me to see your face shining out of every human being without exception.

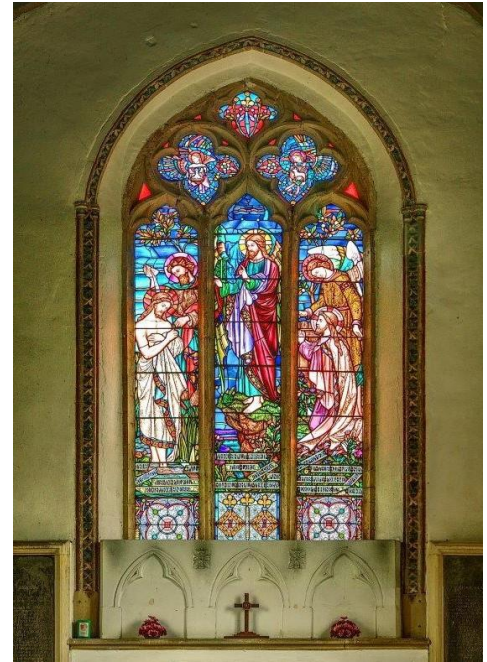
*A time of quiet*

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were worn down by fatigue;  
be with those from whom life drains all energy.  
You needed the help of a passing stranger;  
give us the humility to receive aid from others.  
To you Jesus, weighed down with exhaustion and in  
need of help  
be honour and glory.  
Amen.

### Dedication

Christ became obedient unto death for us,  
**even death upon a cross.**  
His punishment has brought us peace.  
**By his wounds we are healed.**  
Let us walk the way of the cross  
**In the name of Christ**  
Amen.



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### Section Five

2.45pm

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,  
**Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

### Hymn

Here might I stay and sing  
no story so divine,  
never was love, dear King,  
never was grief like thine  
This is my Friend,  
in whose sweet praise  
I all my days  
could gladly spend.



*A time of quiet*

### **Reader 5: Jesus is nailed to the cross**

*When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'*  
*Luke 23:33-38*



Has our faith ever really been tested? How would we stand up to great physical pain? Would we cry out to God against the unfairness? Would we ask “Why do you let this happen to me?” Or would we, like Christ, be able to accept the suffering? Able even when in great pain of mind and body to reach out to others and realise their needs? Christ forgives his torturers – would we be able to do the same? His thoughts are for others. Ours would be for ourselves. Jesus takes from us all bitterness and hardness of heart. Help us to live generously and without selfishness.

*A time of quiet*

### **Prayer**

**Lord Jesus, you bled in pain as the nails were driven through your flesh;  
transform through the mystery of your love the pain of those who suffer.  
You spoke words of love in your hour of death;  
Help us to speak words of life to a dying world.  
To you, Jesus who offer hope to the hopeless, be honour and glory. Amen.**

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

### **Dedication**

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**even death upon a cross.**  
His punishment has brought us peace.  
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**In the name of Christ.**  
**Amen.**



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### **Conclusion**

2.55pm

### *Music plays*



Reader 6:

*It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.'*

*Having said this, he breathed his last*

*Luke 23:44-46*

*A time of quiet*

*We leave the service when wished, in silence...*

*With thanks to David Ferré for photography*